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ABSTRACT

Educational policy, which did not really exist in the United States on a national level until the 1950s, might better be termed social-educational policy. Teachers are expected to be the agents of social change, achieving in the classroom such objectives as racial integration, general use of the national language, the memorization by students of certain nationally defined cognitive concepts, and the establishment of an acceptably trained manpower pool. Funding for the implementation of these policies, mandated by legislation, executive edicts, and court decisions, has traditionally been inadequate to train teachers in the full range of their new, and usually additional, duties. Evaluations of policy implementation tend to pay scant attention to the impact of policy on individual students, on teaching methods, on parents, or on interpersonal relationships within the educational setting. Instead, evaluations concentrate on analysis of test scores that neither measure the significant effects of policies nor take into consideration the negative attitudes instilled by inadequate policy implementation. (PGD)

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THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY ON CHILDREN

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EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND CHILDREN

Educational policy is by definition broad in scale, providing direction to units which constitute a large system. The larger systems are, the more likely they are to be multicultural or multiethnic. Therefore educational policy for large systems must take into account a range of different interests, values, and objectives.

The application of educational policy, which is macro, inevitably is slowed down by resistance from constituent units. The constituent or micro units, administrators who apply policy inevitably are met with the message that "they don't know us," or "they don't know the reality of this place." "This place is different, that policy won't work here" is common everywhere. The administrator represents that opinion to the policy makers in trying to explain the resistance to policy implementation. The local people are correct. Policy makers don't know how it is out there, and more--they don't want to know the details of each community's peculiarities, or the obstacles which exist in implementing educational policy. If policy makers knew and accepted all of the local variabilities they would probably hesitate to make policy, other than to say--let each unit make its own policy. And that was indeed educational policy until well into the twentieth century. Federal policy mostly didn't exist, and state policy was confined to structural concerns. Local units, even each school made educational policy.

The explosion in educational policy, beginning in mid twentieth century was due to many factors--the determination to end segregation, a will to attack causes of poverty and discrimination, a fear of falling

behind in the world power competition, and many other factors. What makes educational policy in the United States so complex is the fact that there is federal policy, which is quite new, overlaying state policy. Until Brown in 1954, states made educational policy. After 1954, a federal policy grew rapidly, and not just with regard to segregation, but also the curriculum, beginning in 1958 with the National Defense Education Act.

Educational policy is confected at both federal and state levels by courts, legislative bodies and the executive branch which makes administrative law. The last is the most pervasive body of law and also that which stirs anger, or resistance. Policy creates normative rules, with which lower level units must construct their rules and regulations. There is a hierarchy of policy making agencies, federal over state, but within each level, each branch seeks to make its own mark and is sometimes in conflict with other branches. Courts create law, but legislatures may try to turn back the courts' sallies at law making. Courts have led the way since 1954, but only since 1954; that could change. The legislative branch might re-establish its power.

With so many policy making agencies, conflict in educational policy is possible not only within a level, as between Congress and courts, but more often, between levels. The conflict in Louisiana saw a state court challenge a federal court, unsuccessfully, but that it happened, now might encourage other federal branches to challenge the federal courts. The federal system is alive and well. States are not powerless; they have ways of slowing down or stopping the implementation of federal law which they really don't want.

The extent of conflict between courts and executive and legislative branches is peculiar to the U.S. Nations in the civil law tradition do not allow their courts to make law or to challenge statutory law or the decreed law of the executive branch. Our educational policy, then, is unusually difficult to define, subject to challenge by other branches or at another level, and evocative of conflict. The Venezuelan code of school law and the regulations of the Ministry are by contrast easy to find, brief, and are applicable everywhere in the nation. The U. S. federal system is a rarity in that states are delegated so much power. Education, everywhere else, with one or two exceptions, is clearly a national responsibility.

With respect to the substance of educational policy, it is possible to identify some major themes or concepts in the educational policies of many nations, including the United States, in the second half of the Twentieth Century. Among these are:

1. Integration or de-segregation of races, or it may be referred to in some nations as a concept of nationalization. The Supreme Court of the United States since 1964 and the Congress since 1964 has insisted, officially, on non-recognition of separation of races, in education, with the exception of federal schools for Indian students. But a smaller proportion of Indian students each year attends the federal Indian schools. Latin American nations proclaim a policy of nationalization in which only the national language is used in schools, and only one "official" race, the Mestizo, or mixed, is recognized. The cultural differences of Native groups is not recognized

in the language, or even the national ideology reflected in textbooks in schools. The new African nations emphasize their unity as societies de-emphasize tribal divisions. All nations have the imperative of reaching for unity across diversity, of preaching common national themes which pull together rather than separate.

The nation may allow for limited segregation for small groups on the basis of race or ethnicity but such allowances are tempered by the national ideology which forms part of the curriculum, notably in the social studies.

2. Insistence on the use of the national language as the medium of instruction. Nations have little tolerance for use of a language other than the national language, except to be used as a medium to assist the child in learning the national language. This is the U. S. policy expressed in Lau v. Nichols[1], in Andean nations in which Indian languages are used early in the grades, and in Brazil where German and Italian were dropped except as second languages during the time of President Vargas. In nations where there is more than one official language, the same principle holds true.

In Quebec, the native language of Indian people is tolerated as a cultural artifact, but Indian children are expected to learn French.

3. A national curriculum enforced by national examinations. While the U. S. might seem the exception to this trend, it is in fact not an exception. Federal guidelines to many programs require testing for cognitive outcomes, regardless of any other objectives which might be expressed by the school, or even encouraged by the federal program guidelines. Most other nations have centralized education systems, and nearly all have some kind of guidelines for annual examinations, or actually administer the examinations. Many nations are moving into U. S. style objective end of year examinations, down to the one best choice among five. The nearly universal push for measuring cognitive outcomes is a reflection of the fact that nations with centralized ministries of education also tend to have well defined bodies of content or concepts to be covered for each grade. Little attention is paid in national curricula to non-cognitive expectations, and whatever these are are left to be defined by schools or teachers and, blessedly, with no national testing. National policies calling for evaluation (meaning "testing") reflect the universal concern of economic planners for means of measuring educational productivity. National evaluation or testing makes even more concrete and impelling the learning (meaning memorization) of the concepts in the national curriculum. A final concomitant of a national cognitive curriculum - evaluation policy is a widespread confusion or

substitution of evaluation with or for educational research. There is a large core of professionals around the world who do evaluation regularly, but who do not, for lack of time, money or encouragement, do research. I hesitate to rely on the metaphor of good money and bad, but it is a fact that national evaluation displaces, certainly precedes, research.

4. Proclamation of universal schooling, accompanied by means for preventing that from being realized national policy is rhetorical in its intention of providing schooling for everyone under a certain age or grade level, but in few nations, mostly socialist nations, that goal is achieved. In nonsocialist nations the rhetoric is not accomplished because of lack of resources devoted to education. The reality of the developing world is most usually schooling consistent with manpower development objectives - the system is built only to accommodate a certain number of students. Others enter and fail, or never enter. In many nations, processes for getting rid of students are described, as in the U.S. in some nations protecting the students' rights to schooling are described in detail, and in others, certain acts of schools or school officers are proscribed by law. The law either uses the rationale of pupil control, or greater societal need, such as permits to work or paying for as much of schooling costs as possible, to diminish the goal of universal education. Most nations may proclaim

the social benefits of universal education, but most actually follow the manpower model. Economists embrace the new testament quotation "many are called but few are chosen." The implementation of educational policy has been examined by economists, using production function approaches or dependency theory, and by a few educational sociologists. Relatively little research on the social effects of educational policy is to be found. The obstacles in implementing policy are many and have been identified by social theorists as in diverse ways such as social engineering theory, cultural adaptation or determinism, economic decision theory, motivation theory, communication theory, and political mobilization theory.

The more far-reaching or basic the policy is, the larger the period for implementation and the more definition of the policy is needed for people in lower levels of the system. Policy always requires translation for implementation. Policy left as policy is rhetoric, and changes nothing. Translation of policy to action at community and school levels brings conflict. If national policy could be proclaimed as national intentions, such as universal enrollment, teachers and administrators with untroubled consciences refuse to admit or easily expel students.

In the United States court-made educational policy is different from the type just described. A court rules on specific issues at certain places and prescribes remedies - which some see as harmful for other people than the plaintiffs. Policy made from case law is policy by introduction. That's what makes enemies, or cowards, of us all, at one time or another.

Court-made educational policy offers fewer specific guidelines to administrators, and takes longer to implement, because at any time, court-made policy may be restricted by a new ruling. Courts examine specifics of place and time in the common law system, and consider whether the precedents bind a district in a particular case. Our experience in court-made educational policy, unassisted by legislated or administrative law, is that implementation moves slowly and on a broken front. A few districts respond quickly, most implement it gradually, and some not at all.

Legislated policy and administrative law, the law made by state and local boards of education are more specific, apply with fewer chance of exceptions, and are easier to understand. But the more specific the policy, the more resistance may be expected to it, at least early in the stage of implementation.

The more specific policy happens to be the easier to judge implementation. It is easier to evaluate policy which is specific, but implementation of court-made policy is more difficult to observe and analyze. Implementation guidelines are not the best products of a common law court. Policy which is made with courts leading the way with the principle, on the basis of a case, followed by legislation and administrative guidelines constitute a firmer case for evaluation of implementation.

In a federalist democracy, the tightness of the three way model linking courts, legislative and executive branches with agreement among the three at federal and state levels, is not judged to be ideal by many educational administrators and local board members. At the local level, many administrators or board members crave some elbow room with policy.

The complaints about excessively detailed federal guidelines and policy now are echoed in the White House. No matter how much we like or dislike the tightly linked model, it is relatively rare. A looser model of policy, leaving the type and speed of implementation is more common in the U.S., and is more to the liking of administrators. The loose-linked model is more typical, because we live in a society in which there is competition among the three branches of government, and among federal, state, and local levels for power resources. The loosely-linked elements are the three branches operating on federal and state levels, with considerable amounts of time lag and disagreement on implementation among the three branches at both levels.

Where does implementation of educational policy occur? Administrators and board members discuss implementation, but implementation takes place ultimately with someone doing something for, with, or to students. The unit of analysis may be a dyad (student and professional) or a classroom. In order to understand implementation, there is no escaping the imperative to observe interactions between teachers and students, or between other professionals and students.

Educational policy so far has only superficially changed structural arrangements in education. We imagine the changes related to busing in desegregated systems to be far reaching changes, such as numbers of black and white children in schools, miles traveled, numbers of buses used, and the numbers of buildings closed, but these are only surface phenomena.

The subjects, or objects, of educational policy are students. In our democracy the laboratory for social change is the school. Whether

the conscience of the society be stirred by racial segregation, religious confrontation, opportunity for handicapped people, or remediation of poverty, the school is the place where it all becomes to bear. Perhaps we feel that children's crusades are preferable to the adult kind. What happens inescapably, as we expect children to be our social pioneers, that teachers must be the social engineers.

Educational policy is really social - educational policy. Teachers are the true agents of social change. They have to alter their behavior, must adapt to new social expectations. Administrators and board members are involved but as facilitators. The buck stops, not with a school board member, or even a principal, but with a teacher who must radically redesign a classroom to accommodate mainstreamed handicapped children, a racial mixture, or bilingual children, or a combination of all three.

Phyllis Casey is a teacher in Raleigh, North Carolina. She teaches senior high school English. She was a student in Raleigh and graduated from a segregated high school there about ten years ago. As a teacher in an integrated high school she talks about how racial balance is achieved in classrooms each fall. Teachers trade a black girl for a white boy, in order to achieve racial and sex balance. She describes her role as a club advisor, in which role she must see that there are co-presidents, or co-secretaries. She forwards names of co-representatives of the home-room who will serve on the student council. She keeps elaborate records of each student's learning, in case a student who gets a failure warning has parents who will protest, or sue. She has been accused by white kids of being too pro black, and by black kids of being too pro white.

In her days in the black high school in the 1960's, she learned about black history and great black people. She belonged to black kids'

societies. She now is allowed to teach little about black history or black people. There is no Dubois or Martin Luther King club. Her black kids do not know the black national anthem. What has been lost, and why, and how, we don't know, any more than we know what has been gained in the great re-shuffle of kids. Children treated as pawns or objects, or numbers bother her intensely. She knows intimately what has been gained and lost in her corner of America. The thousands of Phyllis Caseys can tell us more about implementation than all the evaluation "shops" in the country.

Phyllis Casey had no preparation and almost no training for coping with the great social experiments which she must now pull off single-handed.

A teacher such as Ms. Casey must:

1. Find out the elements of educational policy somehow, from someone.
2. Figure out how social policies inter-relate or clash, and decide which can be implemented at the expense of another.
3. Translate educational policies to what can and must be done in the classroom.
4. Plan and carefully move from present practice to an integration of old and new practice which implements new policy.
5. Figure out how much her students can take, and what risks attend upon implementing new practice in the classroom.

6. Assess how new practice which implements new policy affects each student's learning and classroom socialization.
7. Explain new practice and the results on students to the parents.

That is a brief review of what teachers must do to modify their behavior. Of course some ignore the whole process, and others quit. But only teachers can show us the detailed results of implementation of social-educational policy in schools. Why haven't we heard from teachers such as Pnyllis Casey?

Evaluations of educational policy have been macro evaluations. They also happen to be hard to obtain, something like rare books, both in difficulty of locating them and certainly in price, once you do locate one. Macro evaluations speak to policy, including the restructuring of educational governance and organizations. The fashioning of a macro evaluation resembles policy formation itself, according to Ernest House,[2] and others who have studied the phenomenon of large scale evaluations. The triangle of federal administrative agency (usually the contracting office), the legislative staff on Capitol Hill concerned with review of the program, and select personnel administering the program at state or local levels are the parties interested in the outcome. Add to that threesome the concerned professional organizations in Washington, and the cooks can compile a recipe which pleases the taste of the most powerful clients, usually the federal agency. If one of the client groups is likely to become too displeased with the taste, ingredients can be added or left out at the discretion of the cook.

Left out of large scale evaluations are the concerns of parents, teachers and students.

Feedback of opinions concerning a program from those three groups is rare. When it is included in an evaluation, the data are not treated with the reverence accorded the standardized test data or cost data.

The opinions of parents, teachers, and students are valid indicators of a program's impact and utility. If teachers can't understand or reasonably follow the IEP, or the court-ordered norms for balancing race and sex in a classroom these facts are important. So are the attendant causes of their lack of understanding whether they be the lack of information presented to teachers in clear English about the policy, or the lack of explanation to teachers concerning what changes in the school and classrooms will have to take place. Typically, policy is made, and administrators read directives or read about it in information service bulletins. Teachers are told much later that they will have to begin filling out new forms and accept new students, all of which is overload on what they are already doing. Teachers are expected to invent means of complying with new policy and maintaining the old classroom system at the same time. A good example is the compliance with PL 94-142. Mainstreaming, a desirable social-educational policy, has required teachers to accept handicapped children in their classrooms, whom they have not been trained to educate. The teachers must complete the Individual Education Program and explain it to the parents. Few teachers have had more than three hours' orientation to the IEP, its purposes, or its implications. The better a teacher copes with handicapped children in the classroom, the more apt she is to be assigned more handicapped children. The extra

children have not meant fewer normal children assigned to that teacher. Methods of instruction, ways and means of monitoring the handicapped child's progress, physical maintenance of the handicapped child, the added possibility of liability for malpractice for the teacher, all have combined to cause a negative opinion of the law by the teachers. The federal policy was not accompanied by sufficient money for training or implementation. The money that was appropriate for implementation and training, as happens with all such funds, was used at higher levels for staffing before it trickled down to training of teachers.

Social-educational policy such as education for the handicapped, bilingual education, and desegregation have taken on a negative loading with teachers and parents, because teachers and schools were not organized to implement the policy. The policy was thrown at school systems, and training for implementation has not even begun to catch up with policy. Evaluations have not warned policy makers of negative effects at the school and classroom, or neighborhood level, because educators looked at macro effects, too easily collected,which did not really measure compliance or implementation of policy. Changes in test scores are not valid measures of a certain policy any more than they are measures of an interaction of dozens of policies, old and new.

The faults of macro evaluations are not only that they are not evaluations of a particular policy, any more than of some other policy interacting with it. The science of macro evaluation, riveted to standardized test scores has not been advanced, conceptually, or in methodology. The evaluations are flawed with respect both to their internal validity, as well as to the unwillingness or inability of the evaluators to attend to advancing the science of education. As a

professor I am pleased that universities have had little or nothing to do with the game of policy evaluation in the 1970's. They have been shut out of the bidding process. It is not surprising that the evaluation shops or firms have not advanced the concepts or methodology of evaluation. They have insulated themselves from any influence for change in the theory and methodology of evaluation.

If large scale evaluation of policy is to measure implementation, or compliance, it will have to observe behavior in the smallest possible unit of analysis affected which the policy seeks to influence. Examples are classrooms, families, groups of families, groups of students within classrooms, and individual student-teacher relationships. Some questions which evaluations should address are the following:

1. How does a school affected by the policy distribute its students to teachers and classrooms?
2. How are teachers and students prepared for the new assignment procedures?
3. How are parents prepared for new assignment procedures?
4. Within classrooms,
   a. have teachers been prepared to cope with new types of students assigned to them as a result of the new policy or program? How is the additional burden distributed and adjusted for among teachers?
   b. On what basis are students assigned to teachers as a result of the policy or program?

c. What are the changes in verbal interaction patterns in policy-targeted classrooms between teacher and students with learning problems, and between teacher and other students?

d. What are the changes in social interactions that occur among students in policy-targeted classroom situations, or in student activities?

e. What are the changes in the kinds of social interactions that occur among parents of students in policy-targeted schools?

f. What do students, parents, and teachers think about the changes in their lives and classroom as a result of the new programs?

g. What do teachers do in policy-targeted classrooms, as a result of the policy or program?

h. What changes in families' social patterns occur as a result of the program or policy?

i. Do parents, teachers, students, and administrators in the policy-targeted schools and neighborhoods propose legitimate alternatives to the ways the policy is being implemented?

If the evaluation of policy is truly open to alternatives (goal-free in Scrivens' terms), the people most affected can speak out, propose alternatives, even participate actively in policy evaluation.

The values of the people affected must be taken into account if policy is to be implemented successfully. Policy evaluators who behave as technicians ignore data such as values, preferences and common sense of parents and teachers. We may not be observing massive resistance to busing for desegregation, bilingual programs, or mainstreaming handicapped children in classrooms, so much as a revolt by the subjects for being treated as objects. The parents, teachers and students, convinced of the need for changed educational policy know far better how to accomplish it than the technicians who are designing and evaluating the implementation of it.

Policy planners see the system implementing the policy as being a pyramid, with the people at the bottom being evaluated and not participating in planning implementation. Organizational theorists such as Argyris, Bennis, and Havelock argue the benefits of participative management as being mainly better productivity. Those who implement policy at the "bottom" know best where the resistance is and how to solve the problem of resistance. They know best how to design the small-scale incremental methodology necessary to accommodate new kinds of clients in new settings. But they need help, they need to be listened to, and they have a lot of answers. The evaluators don't have them and the policy planners are too remote to design implementation at the micro level of the classroom and hallway, playground and neighborhood. The real problems plaguing us are that evaluators don't listen, don't look at what's going on, and report to the top policy people massive failure when in fact there are difficulties which no one is trying to overcome.

Children are being treated as objects of social policy. They have something to say about how to implement educational policy. Participative management of schools, and participative evaluation management need to include children. They know what is happening to them when policies require that they change their social patterns. While the law has been zealous in defending the rights of children against teachers and parents, it is possible that the children are being stripped of the help of those who know and love them most. The results of the common law campaign to give children more civil rights needs to be examined carefully by observing what is happening to children in classrooms, families, and on the streets. If children are given their full civil rights they may be victimized in ways that courts cannot prevent. The power of the family and school to help them will be severely curtailed. It may be time to find out from children themselves what they feel about achieving more extensive civil rights. Some participative evaluation needs to be done on the effects of courts' decisions so far as the children's role in families and with other adults.

We really don't know the effect of educational policy on children. We have many studies which show achievement changes and some which show changes in self esteem, or occupational choice, or satisfaction with school over short periods of time, but we really don't have deep analyses which show how children's lives and personalities are affected by policy. For that, micro analyses which examine children in their actual setting are required. Macro analyses have kept the test industry in good economic shape, and helped policy makers sell programs to the Congress, but it's time we got some really valid information on the people affected.

References

1. Lau v. Nichols, Y14 U. S. 563 (1974).

2. Ernest R. House. Evaluation with validity. Beverley Hills, Sage Publications, 1980.